

Christian Missions — A Work of Faith.

A

S E R M O N,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

MEETING IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS,

OCTOBER 3, 1865.

BY

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AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

CHICAGO, ILL., OCTOBER, 1865.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. KIRK, for his Sermon preached on Tuesday evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*

S E R M O N .

2 CORINTHIANS, v. 7.

WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT.

FAITH is not here opposed to sight absolutely, but walking by faith to walking by sight. Sight has its proper sphere ; being competent to guide in the lower departments of life, but wholly insufficient to direct our steps in all that pertains to our higher faculties and relations, and to our eternal destiny. The man who walks by faith, walks with God, as Enoch did. The man who walks by sight, walks with the world. The former walks with Abraham, towards the “ city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God ” ; the latter, unless his course be changed, will never enter within its blessed gates.

Sight can guide us in selecting nourishment, clothing, shelter and comfort for the body, but cannot show us the path of eternal life : it can see man, but not God ; earth, but not heaven.

The men who walk by sight complain of the decree that their salvation shall be conditioned on their faith, and not on their good works. But it is so, even in worldly matters. The man who sows his field, or freights his ship, does it by faith. If he had bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, that would not inspire in

his heart the kind of confidence which sends the ship to a country he never saw—the faith which lies at the basis of agriculture and commerce.

Those who walk by sight, walk in a world which they consider to be real, while they regard as visionary the views and operations of faith. They see but two forces in the world—the mechanical powers of nature, and the attractive power of “the things which perish in the using.” To them the objects of faith are the stuff of which dreams are made.

I shall now attempt, by an examination of the nature and the actings of faith, to vindicate it before unbelievers, and to quicken it in the hearts of believers.

WHAT IS FAITH?

It has been described as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It may be defined as, appreciative and receptive belief. It is,

I. *A rational belief in competent testimony* ; especially in that which God has given to man, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. In this exercise it is purely rational ; that is, based on reasons abundantly satisfactory to the human understanding. The evidence that Jesus Christ lived at the commencement of the era named after him, and that he delivered the words attributed to him, is as complete and satisfactory as that on which the belief of the histories of Rome, Greece and Egypt are founded.

There are, indeed, other religious writings claiming our confidence. But Brahminism has no historical basis ; no historical documents to substantiate its claims ; and Islamism has not one mark of a heavenly origin, except the strong Monotheism which is not original with it, but

borrowed from the Scriptures. Jesus Christ has been on earth, as a man, perfectly truthful, yet claiming to be our God and Saviour ; and confirming this claim by all the signs and badges of a divine messenger, a present deity. Annihilate him, or make him a myth or a deceiver, and the world is buried in the ruins of the Roman empire.

There was nothing in the vanquished Latin race, nor in their barbarian conquerors, to resuscitate society. It was the church of Jesus that cast into the turbulent elements of the dark ages those principles and forces which saved Europe, and made it become the home and the fountain of civilization for the world. That statement no historian can contradict. But this Jesus of Nazareth, from whom his church received these vital truths and regenerating impulses, is our witness to the divine origin of the Old Testament, our voucher for the divine inspiration of the men who wrote his history and unfolded his doctrines.

The man who refuses to receive the religion taught in the Scriptures, must decide to have either no religion, or one of human invention. In either case, he determines that his walk to destiny and eternity shall be by sight. Thus he must either give up to doubt his relations to his Creator, and to chance his eternal interests ; or, he must make a religion. And need I make the appeal : What sane man would stake his soul on a religion made by man ! Faith is also,

II. *The moral judgment exercised on the highest questions that occupy human thought.*

In the Mosaic Scriptures we find a code of laws. In the Gospels we find an uncoded law, accompanied by a portraiture and history of Jesus Christ, together with

his revelation of the character and government of God. Now it is with us a subordinate question, whence we obtain these documents. We accept them as we accept an honest and good man, from his own showing. We accept the law they contain, as law in its sublimest form ; the morality they prescribe, as perfect ; the character of God they exhibit, as containing all excellence in an infinite degree ; the character of Jesus there portrayed, as the most perfect conceivable, and utterly beyond the invention of man.

But he who walks by sight, sees in Jesus "no form nor comeliness, that he should desire him." Excellence is not esteemed by him for its own sake. He has not leaped for joy to discover in Jesus' teachings the ideal of human excellence, after which, and the way to attain to it, the noblest spirits have sighed. The unbeliever, who thinks he has proof that the sacred writers were impostors, if he were a good man, would sit down in sackcloth and ashes, weeping at the discovery. It would break his heart to find that the Bible is not true. Every child of Adam should receive evidence against the divine origin and truth of the Scriptures as a man receives proof of the vileness of one whom he had admired and loved. Faith is also,

III. *Confidence in the declarations of God* as to the past and the future ; including his threatenings and his promises.

We walk by faith not merely in our friends, but, much more, in our infinitely wise Creator, Ruler, Friend and Saviour ; whose testimony is to us the mirror of truth, prized above all the theories of the wisest men, and regarded as infinitely more worthy of consideration than their objections. For us, his promises gild the

future. For his enemies, we see his threatenings shrouding the heavens in blackness. Heaven and earth must pass away, but nothing he has promised or threatened can fail of fulfillment. Our glorious expectations, accordingly embrace,

1. *The prospects of the kingdom of Christ.*

He is to become the king, acknowledged from pole to pole; barbarism, and the false religions that nourish it, are to be abolished; the Bible is to become the controlling moral force in cabinets, legislative halls, schools, families, and hearts; science, philosophy and genius are to find their glory in exalting Jesus once crucified, now risen; and in giving his word ascendancy over the human heart. We are equally confident,

2. *In regard to the human agency by which this will be effected.*

The power that will produce these revolutions is that which rolls the planets in their orbits; the power of Him, who, while He makes the single grain of wheat to grow into a tall stem, bearing thirty, sixty, or a hundred grains, at the same time employs the farmer to deposit that grain at a suitable season in the soil suitably prepared; and who has equally prescribed the human agency by which He will save the world.

Our trust is in Him who creates the energy of steam; but who does it by engaging man to build the engine, place the wood in one apartment and the water in another, and then apply the match; and, by this simple process, produce one of the mightiest forces submitted to man's control. In our view, the power of the human will, and that of God's Spirit, affect the destinies of nations immeasurably more than climate, or any other physical cause, to which some attribute so much. We expect to succeed in our endeavors,

3. *In regard also to ourselves.* We expect to be saved from merited ruin, and then to receive a crown of glory, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give us in the day of his appearing. We hope to meet many a glorified spirit in Heaven, who will say to us: You led me to Him who brought me here. There is then one other element of faith to be considered. By thus affecting us,

IV. *Faith becomes entirely practical, a supreme controlling power in our life.*

1. *By enlisting the deepest sympathies of our hearts.* This it effects by showing us that all mankind are in a deplorable condition, as apostate from God. The sympathy this fact excites is the starting point of all our missionary institutions and efforts.

Travelers describe to us the degraded state of the pagans; but we get more soul stirring sympathy from one verse of the Bible than from all we ever heard about the festival of Juggernaut, burning of widows, or the atrocious cruelties of the king of Dahomey. This one declaration—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," presents to us a more terrible picture of heathendom, and the prospects of idolators, than anything our eyes could discover; for this is the divine disclosure of the final issue of their wickedness. We, at the same time, get from the Scriptures loftier conceptions of the worth of manhood,—of what a Chinaman is, and may become; of what a Kaffir, a Fejeean or a New Zealand cannibal may be,—than from any other source. Our faith sees in each of them, a child of our common Father; made to be pure, lovely, intelligent, refined; a companion of angels, a courtier in the heavenly palace; to outlive the world, and the sun that adorns the sky; capable of a blessedness ever growing, never interrupted,

never ending ; sharer in the blessedness of God himself.

That shows us, too, that every man is a responsible, a depraved, and a guilty creature. If he is under the gospel, he has sinned against that. If he is under the light of nature, the Word says ; “ They are without excuse ; ” “ because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them.” Men palliate idolatry ; but God declares it to be one of the streams issuing from a depraved heart. In this, however, we only coincide with the testimony of the better class of heathen writers, who have exposed their vices and degradation with a severity that can scarcely be surpassed.

We should attempt in vain to relieve our sympathy by shallow reasonings, or a shallower philanthropism, which folds its arms and leaves them to those tender mercies of God, to which it would not thus carelessly trust a child attacked by fever ; no, not the life of a favorite dog.

We hear the God of justice declaring : “ The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness,” pagan or Christian, polished or rude. If the mercy of our God does not prevent men from becoming sinners, we cannot see that it will prevent their remaining such. Sin does not appear to us adapted to cure itself. If the mercy of God does not prevent remorse from following a murderer for half a century, we cannot yield to the logic that concludes it will not let the fire still burn and the worm still gnaw through a whole century. Having this belief, our sympathies must be moved. Our faith becomes a practical principle also,

2. *By awakening in us a zeal for the glory of God.* That, too, is an expression which conveys no meaning

to those who walk by sight. By faith we behold something of that glory which fills the earth and heaven; the mild but awful majesty of the uncreated, infinite One; the brightness of that purity which makes the holy angels veil their faces; infinite power controlled by infinite wisdom and love. Every one, beholding that glory reflected in the person of our Redeemer, must desire, with intense longings, to have it manifested to all.

Some persons express their wonder at our "meddling with the heathen." Are they who thus wonder patriots? If they are, we, then, would appeal to them. When our country was outraged by traitors, when the world turned against it, did you feel no earnest desire to set the world right? Did you consider it meddling to send out, and even abroad, men, papers, books, letters, to vindicate our country's honor? Could we, who love her sacred name, look with indifference upon the caricatures, the misrepresentations, the ignorance concerning us, which others manifested? No. Neither can we behold with indifference three-fourths of this race 'changing the glory of the incorruptible God into' hideous caricatures of 'corruptible man; worshiping and serving the creature rather than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed forever.' Does blasphemy shock you; and why not idolatry? To persuade them to know and love, obey and please Him, is to us the most important use of our time and powers. Then again,

3. *Faith quickens our gratitude.* As Paul expresses it—"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them;" Him who has loved us from the beginning, and loves us now; who has laid aside

his heavenly glory, and then laid down his precious life for our redemption. For us he came to suffer, to weep, to bleed, to die. This is the most wonderful love ever seen. There never were seen such tears, before nor since.

Now, when this friend and Saviour bids us go and tell these poor, perishing people that he came to save them, can we refuse? His appeal is made to every generous sentiment in our hearts: "Freely ye have received, freely give." It has pleased him, that by the foolishness of preaching men shall be saved. But, more especially,

4. *Our faith inspires us with full confidence in the transforming and saving power of the Holy Spirit, through the gospel.* And in this belief we go earnestly forward to evangelize the world; that is, to make men acquainted with the person and work of Jesus Christ. To this end, and in this confidence, we send forth the Bible to these people, to every man in his vernacular tongue. To this end we place before them living examples of piety,—the preaching, teaching and daily life of believing men and women, sent to dwell in the midst of them. Faith also,

5. *Leads us to pray, and to pray with expectation.* God has made prayer one of our principal duties; and he has given us the most positive and full assurance that he never leaves unregarded or unanswered prayer for objects he approves, offered in the way he prescribes. Especially are we encouraged to pray for that Holy Spirit who once brooded over the chaos of the material world, to bring it under law, and into order, life and beauty; and who equally broods over the moral world, and regenerates hearts and communities by means of the Gospel of Christ.

How far, then, does faith elevate us above the sphere

of science or speculation ; embracing, as it does, in its commanding vision, the great salient points of the past ; the mighty plans, yet unexecuted, of the infinite mind !

Faith is the root of heroism. A man to be morally strong must, like Columbus, believe in something he has not yet seen ; something beyond and above himself ; and his heroism will rise in grandeur proportionably to that of the objects of his faith. Well might one observe, “ One person with a belief, is a social power equal to ninety-nine who have only interests.” And therefore, the only safety of a country like ours, growing in wealth and material power, is to increase in some kind of faith, but especially religious faith. A heartless, skeptical republic is an impossibility ; as France and other states have terribly demonstrated.

This question then meets us : Can we show the men who walk by sight nothing they can recognize ? Must our faith appear to them Quixotic ; especially that fruit of it, our missionary enterprise ? Are there no proofs of its worth that lie within the range of their vision ? Yes. There is one aspect of it that demonstrates, even to them, its harmony with the laws of the moral universe ; its practical and eminently utilitarian character. They can see its influence on personal character and national destiny.

Where, we then inquire, are there more exalted specimens of character to be found than on the missionary roll ; from the days of Peter, John, James and Paul ; from the days of St. Patrick, Columba and Boniface, down to the missionaries of modern days ? Where has been displayed loftier zeal than that which carried such men as these to the dwellings of barbarians, to the cabins and caves of the wild Britons and Celts ? We see the noble Lebwin of the eighth century, going forth

from his British home, moved by a Christ-like compassion, to the pagans of the continent; alone, unpatronized, unprotected. Suddenly he presents himself to the wild and warlike Saxons, in the midst of their idolatrous worship. Fearlessly he stands, with the cross in one hand and the Gospel in the other, crying to them: "Hearken unto me; and not indeed to me, but unto Him who speaketh by me. I declare unto you the commands of Him whom all things serve and obey." The amazed warriors at first are enraged—at length awed into silence. Every murmur ceases. A new feeling starts into existence beneath those stern visages and war-scarred frames, while the believing man, like Stephen, is gazing upon the face of Him who died to redeem them, and while he is denouncing their degrading rites and cruel superstitions. Under that man, Christianity, with all its civilizing power, entered that part of Europe.

Shall I speak of others, like Eliot, Martyn, Brainerd, Neff, Carey, Harriet Newell? Let Hyder Ali, one of the mightiest of the Indian princes, testify to the character of Schwarz. When the British commissioners wished to treat with him, his reply was, "Send me Schwarz. I can trust him; but I want none of your agents." We may also cite the eminent reputation our own missionaries have gained, not only for themselves, but for our nation, with all the civil and military officers of Great Britain, both in India and Western Asia.

Turn, then, to the results of these labors. It was no burst of romantic enthusiasm when Adalbert, the apostle of Prussia, falling by the hand of the fierce Wends, stretched himself on the earth in the form of the crucifix; and it was not poetic fancy in Carlyle to say of the act, "He was thus setting his mark upon a heathen

country;" for he was taking possession of it in his Master's name.

M. Guizot says: "I think it is not too much to aver that, in the fourth and fifth centuries, it was the Christian church that saved Christianity; that it was the Christian church, with its institutions, its magistrates, its authority—the Christian church which struggled so vigorously to prevent the interior dissolution of the empire, which struggled against the barbarian, and which in fact, overcame the barbarian; it was this church, I say, that became the great connecting link—the principle of civilization—between the Roman and the barbarian world."*

But this Christian church was planted and nurtured to maturity by missionaries. Christianity came directly from Heaven to Bethlehem. It reached Rome, Paris, and London, by missionaries. It is now a little more than half a century since we began this work on the broadest scale—to take the map of the world, and, on bended knees, to ask God to show us how we, in the shortest period, could evangelize the human race; or rather, do our portion of the work.

We have followed Providence and apostolic example; striking mainly at great centres of influence, without neglecting the scattered sheep; *introducing* Christian truth, institutions and influences; leaving it to the natives to complete the work, as soon as competent leaders from their own people are trained. And now, what has Faith wrought within this half century? She has revolutionized, without bloodshed or strife, nations and tribes. Not to repeat the story of the Sandwich Islands, which presents one of the most wonderful phenomena of the century, look at this fact,—Wherever the mission-

* Hist. of Civilization, p. 51.

ary can establish himself, every form of evil the people have been long enduring begins to diminish. It is computed that tens of thousands of murders have been prevented by their influence; hundreds of thousands have been rescued from slavery and the debasing thralldom of idolatry. In ten years, sixty thousand of the Karens alone have embraced Christianity. A hundred villages of the Kholis, an interesting tribe in India, have entered upon the same course, seven thousand of them having been baptized in one year. India, in fact, is undergoing a moral revolution. Brahminism, that abominable compound of pride, cruelty and falsehood, is falling under the pressure of Christian truth.

The intellectual influence of the missionary is vast. Education is the handmaid to the gospel. Schools, books, a written language, the press, follow the missionary as light follows the sun. He has opened the path of knowledge to hundreds of thousands. Already it is safe to compute 250,000 pupils in the schools of the 1,600 missionaries sent from Europe and America. And now American Christians are erecting in Syria a Christian college for one of the most numerous and important tribes of uncivilized men—the Arabs.

Who can compute the blessing of the Christian homes our missionaries have created? Woman and the family have been raised to very nearly a Christian level, in thousands of instances. In a word, there are no pioneers of civilization comparable to the missionary. Widow-burning, caste, infanticide, are fleeing before the dawning light. British magistrates in India are sending for missionaries to come and subdue the fierce tribes they govern. Already there are at least 5,000 natives laboring at the various stations for the introduction of the Christian religion; and at least 250,000 pupils are in

the schools, and 250,000 of the people have made an open profession of Christianity,—2,500 of these being Chinese.

And, to add no more, even commerce is feeling the beneficial workings and reaction of Christian missions. The missionary, by creating new ideas, aspirations and tastes in the savage, is opening new fields for traffic, and making demands for our merchandise. Where Mr. Lindley is laboring, in Africa, he has created such a spirit of agriculture that one man, in one year, for his own neighborhood alone, sent \$1,200 to Boston for the purchase of plows. Steamships and railways, cotton mills and telegraphs follow in the wake of Christian missions. The missionaries have become the guardian angels of seamen in the Pacific. Formerly the natives were pirates and murderers. It was perilous to sail among the islands. Now that is all changed, wherever a missionary has been laboring.

Men of the world, walking by sight, here is something that should attract your attention and command your respect. Can you be engaged in anything more worthy of your manhood than this? Is it visionary? No. Your men of science know better than that. Philological, geographical, statistical, zoological, ethnological, meteorological societies now place the missionaries in the chief rank of their coadjutors. The venerable and learned Ritter showed our Secretary the whole series of our *Missionary Herald*, saying that he regarded the missionaries as his most valuable helpers in advancing geographical science; assigning as the reason for this, that they are intelligent; they reside among the scenes and districts they describe; they understand the native language; they are honest; and, he might have added, they have the confidence and cordial co-operation of the people and their rulers.

Brethren, I have now endeavored to vindicate and to animate your faith. It remains to qualify it, and exhibit its

LIMITATIONS.

As this wonderful grace opens the vista of eternity and the vision of heaven to the mental eye, it is exposed to a danger which has not been always sufficiently regarded. Faith includes glorious, almost boundless expectation; and yet, as it is the finite dealing with the infinite, it must have metes and bounds.

1. *We must not expect to find this work an easy task.* Even the Lord of glory had a rough path; must ours be smooth? He bore the cross; can we dispense with it? Personally, we are to enter the kingdom through much tribulation. Our wrestling is not with flesh and blood, but fallen angels; the mightiest of them. Faith is to be tried by fire. It has no alliance with indolence or imbecility. And when we come upon the enemy's territory, we find it a fortified field; all engineered into bastions, abattises and trenches, all bristling with the weapons of war. Brahminism, Buddhism, Islamism and Judaism; Atheism, Pantheism, Deism, Socialism and Paganism, crude or baptized, will meet us in any place, and worldliness and godlessness in every place we may enter. Christ is the owner; but Satan is in possession.

Thus, too, we are obliged to work at disadvantage; separating our laborers from those aids and instruments which laborers at home possess; sending them as strangers to use a foreign tongue.

Then we must organize a financial system founded wholly on faith; contracting large debts at the beginning of the year, to be paid by millions of persons who have given us no legal authority to contract these debts in their name.

Then it is a rule of missionary labor that the more successful it is, the more we have to pay for it. It never keeps itself in motion. It walks by faith; not by mathematics, not by physical nor commercial laws. We send young Scudder to India, endowed with extraordinary qualifications for his work. Just as the door is opening to him he is drowned! We send young Chapin, full of promise, winning the native heart almost at first sight. The harness is scarcely taken on—and he dies! Another missionary, after all the labor and expense of the outfit and voyage of a family, finds he has made a mistake, and retires. A native schoolmaster in Africa just commences a work of education that promises to make the desert blossom. Disease cuts him down before his work is fairly through its first year. Many a cloud we thought big with rain has vanished in a day. Here is the patience of hope, the work of faith, the labor of love. We must also look for,

2. *Sacrifices.* The Master finished his work on a cross; and he made these terms of discipleship: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The conditions of success are: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground, and *die*, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." How shall it die in our case? By the sacrifice of property, children, ease, home; possibly, life itself. When Chapin was dying, in the fullness of faith, laying his precious manhood on his Saviour's altar, he exclaimed, "We shall never call this a waste."

Faith is subject to another limitation to its expectations; even that of,

3. *Delays and failures.* The church waited four thousand years for the advent of her Saviour. She then

saw his cause prosper for a while ; then, for long gloomy centuries, she was again hidden in the wilderness ; until at length the Reformation dawned. How long we have waited for the overthrow of slavery ! But it came. So now we are waiting for the overthrow of infidelity, error, and superstition ; but still the issue tarries.

Then, too, the increase of the world's population marches with gigantic strides. More Pagans are born, more die in one year, than we have converted in over fifty years. Yet we walk by faith, not by sight, sure of two things ; that God will give the increase, and that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. To-morrow, for aught we know, may be preached the sermon that shall convert the Martin Luther of China or India, and thus convulse the old dynasty of Paganism there.

But if we should see the seven magnificent churches of Asia declining, and at length annihilated, we should still know that Jesus lives, and his kingdom is advancing. Think ye our poor attainments and achievements have exhausted the provisions of infinite grace ? Think ye that faith has yet wrought by us her highest work ? No, brethren. We are men of little faith, too full of self and the world to give the power of God room to dwell and work in us. We need more of that love which moved the heart of Him who was, from eternity, in the bosom of the Father ; but could not remain there, as that wail of a lost race came up into his ear, which would make the ease of home intolerable to some, the possession of wealth a burden to others.

Oh, how feeble is our faith in God's promises concerning prayer ! " Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." And he that made this promise has all power in heaven and earth. Look at the Reve-

lator's vision concerning prayer. It was about to receive an answer—a distinct, wonderful answer—and “There was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour.” Then he says: “I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.” They were going to startle a slumbering world with their utterances. But first prayer must have its place. And that place is thus assigned it: “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense.” For what? That there might ascend before the Eternal Father the prayers of saints, typified in the agreeable odors of frankincense. But mark wherein the acceptableness, the sweetness, the prevalence, the power, the efficacy of our praying consists. We have a High Priest, ever interceding in heaven for us. We have the Holy Spirit, ever interceding within us, helping our infirmities. But to continue: “There was given,” to this eighth angel, “much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense”—the sweet-smelling sacrifice of Calvary—“which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.” And what followed? “The angel took the censer and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.” Before the mighty movements of Providence—the sounding of the seven trumpets that shake the world—come first the secret, despised meetings, the closet wrestlings of the saints.

About the middle of the last century, Jonathan Edwards invited the churches of Europe and America to unite in prayer, more specific and earnest than was

usual, for the conversion of the world. Those prayers could be answered only through political convulsions. When He who is "called faithful and true," "the Word of God," comes forth to his final victory, he will be seated upon a white horse, clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, followed by the armies in heaven, on white horses; his eyes as a flame of fire, and on his head many crowns. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations. And he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." And when John saw this wine-press trodden, the "blood came out, even unto the horses' bridles, by the space of sixteen hundred furlongs." Then the cry is heard in heaven, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!"

After the extraordinary praying of the last century, came the American revolution; the French revolution; the Bible, Tract, Sunday school, and Missionary societies; the revivals of religion that have stamped the character of our nation.

In 1859, a call came from missionaries in India for a new concert of prayer—the consecration of a week to prayer, annually. The censer was waved before the throne; then, filled with fire of the altar, it was cast into the earth. And again there were 'voices and thunderings, lightnings and earthquakes.' Russia has broken the chains of twenty-five millions of souls. A nation has been born into freedom in a day. Austria, the home of Metternich, and the Jesuit, has adopted a constitutional form of government. Italy breathes again the air of freedom. Free worship, free schools, free Bibles, freedom for missionary labor, now proclaim the age of despotism past in that beautiful land.

And have we not heard the awful trumpets? Has not

our continent been rocked by the heaving earthquake? Have not four million shackles been riven asunder here? Have we not heard the tramping of that great army marching on through fire and blood to save a Christian nation, and crush a despotism that forbade the coming of a day of freedom and brotherly love?

It was the utterance of so great a statesman as Sir E. B. Lytton, in view of these and similar movements: "Such important events, all leading to efforts so vast and so permanent in their relation to the advancement of the human race, have probably never occurred within so short a space of time."

Truly we are in the rushing current. Faith is then the want of the times. To see the Lord Jesus Christ in these mighty revolutions; to anticipate his movements; to meet him in the attitude of consecration and prayer; that is what is demanded by the signs of the times.

Brethren, guard then your faith. Recognize its insidious foes. Remember that the very companionship of unbelief has its perils. It sees nothing as faith sees. 'Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.' Rationalism—full of self-conceit and learned folly—science perverted, shallow philosophy, worldliness, selfishness in a thousand subtle forms, are the antagonists of your faith. Watch them. Keep the citadel for your Lord—his banner ever waving over it.

Guard your faith, keep it fresh and vigorous, by much converse with its own peculiar themes; by much prayer; by conference with believing souls; by following its intimations; by the self-denying acts to which it calls; by consecrating yourselves, your property, your children, to the work of saving the lost souls of men. Take the cause of Christ closer to your hearts, and say, "Money shall not be lacking. If the Lord prosper us,

we will give as freely as we receive." Take the missionary cause on your hearts, and say, "It shall never falter again, if God will help us. The word 'retrenchment' must never be written to another missionary, already discouraged by the want of means to prosecute his work. There must be no more spasms of zeal, but steady work."

Let our consecrated young men and young women say, "Here am I, Lord; send me."

Let us have a robust faith at home, so expressing itself that the heathen shall hear its boastings in the Lord, and the missionaries shall feel its invigorating pulse. This is our purpose. We are going to fight "on this line" till we have conquered; and 'the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall have been given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;' for "all dominions shall serve and obey him."



